

## GAMING MACHINE

### BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

#### [0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a gaming machine such as a slot machine or a Japanese pinball machine (a so-called "pachinko machine", which will be simply referred to as "pinball machine") including a variable display means for variably displaying various symbols provided for playing a game and a control means such as a microcomputer for controlling the various display.

#### [0003] 2. Description of the Related Art

[0004] Hitherto, as a conventional gaming machine of the above described type, for example, a slot machine including stopping means has been known (a so-called "pinball slot machine" or a so-called "Pachi-Slot machine" in Japan). FIG. 44 shows a conventional pinball slot machine X.

[0005] The pinball slot machine X has a variable display means having the configuration wherein three rotation reels 104 to 106 for displaying various display of a plurality of symbols are disposed in display windows 101 to 103 provided in a front panel 100 and reel stop buttons 107 to 109 for stopping the rotation reels 104 to 106 are provided. When a predetermined symbol combination becomes complete through the variable display means, the player gains a prize.

[0006] Printed on the front of the front panel 100 are a one-medal pay line 111 at the middle stage which becomes activated with insertion of one medal, two two-medal pay lines 112a and 112b which become activated with insertion of two medals, and two three-medal pay lines 113a and 113b which become activated with insertion of three medals for nine symbols (three columns X three rows) displayed through the display windows 101 to 103. In the Figure, numeral 114 denotes a game medium (such as medal, coin, or the like) slot and numeral 115 denotes a start lever for starting a game. In addition to the above-described variable display means having the mechanical configuration using the rotation reels 104 to 106, a variable display means having a display screen such as a liquid crystal screen, on which various display of symbols can be produced is also available.

[0007] As a gaming manner, a game is started as the player inserts game medium into the game medium slot 114. As the player handles the start lever 115, control means controls the variable display means for rotating the reels 104 to 106, thereby producing various display of symbols.

[0008] For the symbols variable displayed, the rotating reels 104 to 106 are stopped in order automatically in a given time or as the player operates the reel stop buttons 107 to 109. At this time, if the symbols on the reels 104 to 106 appearing in the display windows 101 to 103 become a specific combination (winning symbol combination), game medium are paid out to the player as the prize of the win.

[0009] The pinball slot machine X has different winning states. Particularly, in some pinball slot machines, when the winning game of a predetermined winning combination is completed, the player is placed in a gaming state in which the player is given a better condition than the usual state for a predetermined time period in addition to paying out a predetermined number of medals. Such winning combina-

tions include a winning combination for allowing the player to play a predetermined number of games giving a relatively large prize to the player, which will be hereinafter referred to as big bonus (BB), and a winning combination for allowing the player to play a predetermined number of games giving a relatively small prize to the player, which will be hereinafter referred to as regular bonus (RB).

[0010] In the pinball slot machine X, internal lottery processing (simply, internal lottery) is performed and the symbol combination stopped and displayed along the line of the pay lines 111 to 113 made activated, which will be hereinafter referred to as activated line, is determined based on the lottery result and a stop operation timing of the reel stop buttons 107 to 109 pressed by the player. That is, to complete a winning game for paying out medals or coins to the player, it is required that the winning combination be won according to the internal lottery processing, which will be hereinafter referred to as internal winning, and that the player perform stop operation at the timing at which the symbol combination indicating completion of the winning game of the winning combination gaining the internal winning, which will be hereinafter referred to as internal winning combination, can be stopped on the activated line.

[0011] That is, even if the internal winning is accepted, if the player cannot perform the stop operation at a good timing, the player cannot complete the winning game. Thus, the gaming machines requiring that the player have a technique for performing the stop operation at the good timing (the relative importance of intervention of the technique called "observation push" is high) are mainstream at present.

[0012] In such gaming machines, recently, various techniques for designing the front panel 100 and displaying the pay lines 111 to 113 and symbols have been proposed to enhance the game amusement and easily determine a winning game.

[0013] For example, in a gaming machine described in JP-A-4-220276, three sets of liquid crystal shutters are placed in rows in front of display windows corresponding to three rotation reels and when each game is over, the symbols corresponding to the winning symbol combination are displayed through the display window; on the other hand, the liquid crystal shutters corresponding to the remaining six symbols which are not the winning symbol combination are switched to opacity, so that only the three winning game symbols corresponding to the winning symbol combination on the pay line are displayed on the symbol display window.

[0014] In a gaming machine described in JP-A-2000-350805, an optically transparent information display panel including a matrix display unit that can display a dot pattern with a plurality of rows and a plurality of columns of dots is provided at the rear of a front panel or in the proximity of the rear of the front panel and moreover the information display panel is implemented as a transparent EL (electroluminescent) panel for displaying optically transparent characters and symbols in dot patterns.

### SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0015] In the above-described gaming machine including the liquid crystal shutters (JP-A-4-220276), the symbols which do not correspond to the winning game are hidden and